



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Educators Honor Labor and Workforce Commissioner**

(NASHVILLE, Tenn.) –The National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education today recognized Tennessee Commissioner James Neeley with a distinguished service award for his lifelong dedication to workforce development, labor, and education. Neeley currently serves as commissioner for the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Neeley has served for decades to improve opportunities for all Tennesseans, including his service on the executive committee for Education Edge. He was instrumental in securing a \$30 million National School-to-Work Opportunities grant for Tennessee. As Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, Neeley has awarded more than 50 companies close to \$1.5 million in Incumbent Worker Training grants to upgrade skills and training opportunities for their employees. Neeley has also been a strong advocate of developing partnerships across public and private agencies to provide more opportunities for workers and students in Tennessee.

“The Career and Technical Education students and teachers in Tennessee could have no better friend than Jim Neeley,” said Department of Education Assistant Commissioner Ralph Barnett. “His service to insure the quality and relevancy of programs has made a difference to Tennessee's students. Commissioner Neeley's dedication to these projects at the local, state and national levels continues to positively impact current and future programs in career and technical education. His strong voice and respected leadership are treasured assets to those who seek career pathways in high schools all across our state.”

Each year the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium recognizes outstanding individuals across the United States. Award recipients are individuals who have worked tirelessly to improve programs and access to career education. Neeley has served as Chair of the Tennessee Council on Vocational Education for several years. Under his leadership, the council has been involved in Secondary and Post Secondary Vocational Education through support and involvement in curriculum development, industry, and other public sector involvement in Vocational Education. He has been a strong advocate of increasing the graduation rate of students through involvement in Career Programs.

“Commissioner Neeley shines as one of the true public servants of the state of Tennessee. As a private citizen and as a Commissioner for the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, James Neeley has opened up doors of opportunity for young people across the state,” said Education Commissioner Lana Seivers.

The National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium was founded in 1920 as an association of state career education agency heads committed to leadership and outstanding performance in Career Technical Education. The association has a growing membership of over 200 senior state staff and concerned individuals that share the directors' commitment to quality career technical education at the secondary, post secondary and adult levels.

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**Note to Media:** For a photograph of Commissioner Neeley to use in related articles, please contact Rachel Woods with the Department of Education at 615-253-1960 or Milissa Reiersen with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development at 615-253-4251.

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